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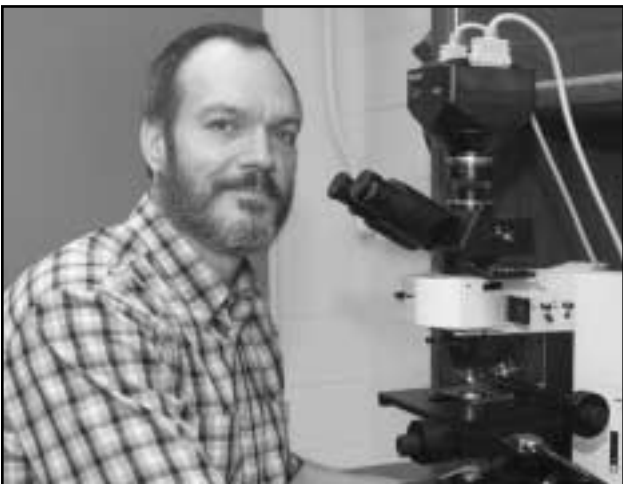
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Asteroids dedicated to STS-107 crew

The final crewmembers of the Space Shuttle Columbia were memorialized in the cosmos August 6 when seven asteroids orbiting the Sun between Mars and Jupiter were named in their honor.

The STS-107 crew – Commander Rick Husband; Pilot Willie McCool; Mission Specialists Mike Anderson, Kalpana “K.C.” Chawla, Dave Brown and Laurel Clark; and Israeli payload specialist Ilan Ramon – will have celestial memorials easily found from Earth.

The names, proposed by NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, Calif., were recently approved by the International Astronomical Union.

The seven asteroids were discovered in 2001 at the Palomar Observatory near San Diego by former JPL astronomer Eleanor F. Helin, who retired in July 2002. The seven asteroids range in diameter from five to seven kilometers (3.1 to 4.3 miles).

“Asteroids have been around for billions of years and will remain for billions more,” Dr. Raymond Bamberg, Principal Investigator of JPL’s Near-Earth Asteroid Tracking System, said. “I like to think that in the years, decades and millennia ahead, people will look to the heavens, locate these seven celestial sentinels and remember the sacrifice made by the Columbia astronauts.”

FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT
Don Bogard, Everett Gibson,
Marilyn Lindstrom, David McKay,
Dave Mittlefehldt, Faith Vilas,
Mike Zolensky and Herbert Zook.
Photos by the JSC Photographers